O

N THE auspicious occasion of the 72nd anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic of China, the Chinese Embassy in Cambodia and myself extend the most sincere greetings to Chinese compatriots working, studying and living in Cambodia.

I would also like to express my heartfelt thanks to all friends from both China and Cambodia who have long supported and contributed to the friendship between our two countries.

This is a moment of proud retrospect. For generation after generation over the past 72 years, the people of China have rallied behind the Communist Party of China in blazing the trail of socialism with Chinese characteristics through thick and thin, forever shaping the outlook of the country.

China’s comprehensive national strength has grown exponentially. Absolute poverty is a thing of the past.

Having accomplished the first centenary goal of building a moderately prosperous socialist country in all respects, the country is now marching in more confident strides towards the second centenary goal of building a great modern socialist country in all respects. The path, the cause and the achievements we have accomplished together in the development of China and human civilization are nothing short of monumental.

This is a moment of inspiring reality check. In the face of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Chinese government has given the people’s interests top priority in its efforts to balance pandemic prevention and control, and economic and social development.

A total of 2.17 billion doses of Covid-19 vaccines have been administered nationwide, with more than one billion Chinese nationals receiving at least two doses.

To date, China has delivered 1.25 billion doses of Covid-19 vaccines worldwide, especially to developing countries, which have greatly slowed down the spread of the pandemic, saving millions of lives.

In the first half of 2021, China’s gross domestic product registered $8.2 trillion, a year-on-year increase of 12.7 per cent. Good news keeps streaming in from various fronts, such as manned space missions, deep-water exploration, supercomputing, et cetera, attesting to the success of China’s innovation-driven development strategy instrumental to the “dual circulation” development model.

This is a moment of great changes for the world. China is a solid champion for peace, development, cooperation and mutual benefit.

We will continuously promote high-quality Belt and Road cooperation as well as the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

China’s development has been and will bring opportunities for the entire world. China chooses to stand on the right side of history and human progress, aligning itself with the common values of humanity for peace, development, equity, justice, democracy and freedom.

Instead of confrontation, hegemonism and power politics, we stand for cooperation and mutual benefit.

This is a moment of honouring friends. China’s time-honoured friendship with Cambodia has been greatly strengthened in our joint efforts to fight the Covid-19 pandemic while promoting sustainable development.

Shortly after the outbreak of the pandemic, His Majesty King Norodom Sihamoni and Her Majesty Queen Mother Norodom Monineath Sihanouk made generous donation to the Chinese people, and Prime Minister Hun Sen visited China at a most critical moment.

China in return sent teams of medical experts to Cambodia in a timely fashion and provided the first batches by far the vast majority of Covid-19 vaccines to Cambodia.

With the help of competent Cambodian departments, tens of thousands of Chinese nationals have been inoculated with Covid-19 vaccines in Cambodia. These heartwarming and touching stories are most illustrative of a China-Cambodia community with a shared future.

This is a moment of profound harvest. Major projects in Belt and Road cooperation, such as the Sihanoukville Special Economic Zone, the Phnom Penh-Sihanoukville Expressway and the new Siem Reap International Airport, are making smooth progress.

Rice, bananas, mangoes, aquatic products and many more Cambodian agricultural products are exported to China.

We have stayed closely coordinated and supported each other on our respective core interests and major concerns.

Together, China and Cambodia are setting an example of mutual trust, mutual benefit, mutual respect, people-to-people connectivity and security cooperation.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to express my appreciation to the Cambodian media and readers who have long supported the development of China, and China-Cambodia relations.

I wish you all happiness and wellbeing.

I am convinced that by following the strategic guidance of our leaders and pooling the efforts of our peoples, the comprehensive strategic partnership of cooperation between China and Cambodia, and the China-Cambodia community with a shared future are bound to reach ever more new heights.

May the People’s Republic of China and the Kingdom of Cambodia enjoy peace and prosperity?

May the China-Cambodia traditional friendship go from strength to strength!

HE Ambassador Wang Wentian, on the 72nd Anniversary of the Founding of the People’s Republic of China.
HONG Kong and Cambodia have maintained close ties and trades and economic relations over the years. According to the Council for the Development of Cambodia, Hong Kong is one of the major sources of foreign investment in Cambodia. In 2019, Hong Kong was the second largest foreign investor in the Kingdom, with investment reaching $913 million. Bilateral trade between Hong Kong and Cambodia reached $51.1 billion in 2020. Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, total trade between the two economies still recorded nearly nine per cent growth in that year.

One of the major trade-related developments between the two places regards the Free Trade Agreement and the Investment Agreement between Hong Kong and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) that came into effect on February 12. Hong Kong enterprises and service providers are now able to enjoy full benefits as committed to by all 10 ASEAN member states under the agreements. Their business opportunities in ASEAN markets will be greatly enhanced.

The Hong Kong-Cambodia relationship can be further strengthened through trade as well as investment, business ventures and cultural and people-to-people exchange. There is a lot Cambodia can tap into with Hong Kong as its partner in exploiting new business opportunities in the Mainland of China, the region and the world market.

The enactment of the national security law and the impending improvement to the electoral system of Hong Kong have helped ensure that patriots administer Hong Kong with the goal of getting on with the substantive business of building a flourishing economy and providing for an engaged community. Hong Kong’s status as an international financial centre has remained solid. The city has continued to thrive as a global hub for financing, offshore renminbi business, and asset and risk management, and is fully committed to promoting the development of green and sustainable finance.

Despite the pandemic’s economic fallout, Hong Kong’s economy has continued to function well. Driven by a strong recovery in trade and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government’s continued investment, Hong Kong’s economy in the first quarter of 2021 rebounded strongly, recording year-on-year real growth of 7.9 per cent and an increase of 5.4 per cent over the preceding quarter.

Hong Kong will rise again to the challenges with its unique advantages such as a free and open economy, the rule of law and judicial independence, making the city an attractive place for investment. Looking ahead, Hong Kong’s flourishing future is underpinned by its role as the multilevel business bridge between the Mainland and the rest of the world.

The 14th Five-Year Plan of the Central Government duly recognises Hong Kong as a global financial, transport and trade centre, and supports the city’s development as an international hub for aviation, innovation and technology. Hong Kong will capitalise on the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area development as the best entry point to grasp the opportunities arising from the Mainland’s development.

Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Bangkok.

Springboard into China and global markets with Hong Kong trade ties
Warmly celebrating 72nd anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China

In the golden season of autumn, we are here to celebrate the 72nd anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. As the whole world joins in the jubilation, on behalf of the China Hong Kong and Macau Business Association of Cambodia, all members of the Hong Kong Business Association of Cambodia pay tribute and bless our motherland!

The year 2021 marks the historical intersection of China’s “Two Centenary Goals” and as we stand on the threshold of a new journey for our motherland, we look back at our glorious journey. Seventy-two years ago, the Chinese people, after arduous struggles, have ushered in the founding of the New China and the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Over the past 72 years, under the strong leadership of the Communist Party of China, the Chinese people have forged through innumerable hardships, wrought one miracle after another, and achieved many great achievements. The Chinese nation has reversed its fate from the continuous decline of modern times to steady progress towards prosperity and strength. In 2021, China has achieved its first centenary goal – building a moderately prosperous society in all respects and is marching confidently towards the second centenary goal of building the nation into a great modern socialist country.

The China-Cambodia friendship has withstood the test of time and has become more prominent in the face of challenges. Since the Covid-19, Prime Minister Hun Sen has remained a staunch supporter, demonstrating the true definition of an Ironclad Friendship. Under the sincere care of President Xi Jinping, the Chinese government has provided tremendous help to Cambodia in pandemic prevention and control. To date, Cambodia has received 26.8 million doses of the Covid-19 vaccine from China, of which 4.3 million doses are humanitarian donations. Recently, the Chinese government pledged to donate another three million doses to Cambodia, demonstrating through concrete actions the spirit of the China-Cambodia community with a shared future.

The overseas Chinese in Cambodia are the witnesses and promoters of the China-Cambodia friendship. Let us, together with the overseas Chinese in Cambodia, continue to maintain the fine tradition of patriotism and mutual assistance and fulfilling our advantages of China-Cambodia integration, while seeking our development by relying primarily on our own effort, at the same time strengthening the China-Cambodia cooperation and Ironclad Friendship. To the prosperity of our great motherland!

To the happiness and well-being of all comrades!
May the brotherly China-Cambodia friendship last forever!
China Hong Kong and Macau Business Association of Cambodia
Hong Kong Business Association of Cambodia
Chairman Yum Sai Sang and board members
Cambodia Chamber of Commerce president Neak Oknha Kith Meng – who is also the chairman of Royal Group of Companies – shares his views on Cambodia-China trade ties on the occasion of the China National Day celebrations.

1. China and Cambodia have enjoyed steady bilateral relations for decades. How do you rate the level of ties so far?

Cambodia and China are trustworthy friends. The relation between both countries has been developed into a comprehensive and strategic partnership. Trade, investment, tourism, culture and people-to-people relations have been strengthened and nurtured from generation to generation.

2. How is the chamber involved in promoting trade ties between the Cambodian and Chinese business communities?

The Cambodia Chamber of Commerce has worked closely with our partner organisations in China. We have jointly organised business and investment promotion programmes. Our major partners include the China Council of International Trade Promotion, the Boao Forum of Asia and the All China Federation of Industry and Commerce.

3. Even during the Covid-19 pandemic, we still hold online business matching with China.

What are the main priority areas that you would like to focus on to enhance bilateral trade, especially during the pandemic?

All areas are important to bilateral cooperation. We should continue strengthening and exploring more areas of cooperation.

4. China has become a major investor in Cambodia and contributed immensely to the Kingdom’s growth. How has Cambodia benefited?

Cambodia has benefited from the bilateral cooperation with China as well as regional mechanism. Investments made by China have contributed to socio-economic development in Cambodia. The country has enjoyed technology transfers and skilled labour development in all areas invested in by Chinese companies, such as infrastructure, energy and agriculture.

5. Cambodia ratified the China Cambodia Free Trade (CCFTA) agreement that aims to increase the trade of goods by reducing and eliminating tariffs, and non-tariff barriers. Will this pact take trade relations to a different level?

Cambodia and China signed the Free Trade Agreement in 2020. The agreement was recently ratified by the National Assembly. It is expected to help boost bilateral economic and trade relations to a new level and continuously improve the wellbeing of the businesses and people of the two countries.

6. How can the recent signing of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership further spur Cambodia’s economic growth?

This year is the first year after the formal signing of the agreement on the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which was signed by 15 countries on November 2020.

This mutually beneficial agreement covers most of the world’s population, with the biggest economic scale and most growth potential so far. Once fully ratified and implemented, it is expected that Cambodia will benefit from this agreement and obtain broader market access for Cambodian products. It will also help to diversify Cambodia’s trade and investment.
Since the establishment of relations 30 years ago, China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have moved forward with fruitful outcomes in various fields, becoming the most dynamic model of cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. There has been notable progress in cooperation in fields such as economy and trade and people-to-people exchanges.

Since China and ASEAN established dialogue in 1991, the two sides have seen bilateral trade skyrocket from $8.36 billion to $685.28 billion in 2020, with average annual growth of 16.5 per cent, according to Chinese customs data. Both sides are each other’s largest trading partners, consolidating the cornerstone of regional economic prosperity.

Thirty years on, China-ASEAN relations keep moving forward, with strategic mutual trust strengthened, all-round cooperation deepened and concrete action in building a community with a shared future.

The joint fight against Covid-19 is just another example of the ever-closer relationship and the spirit of a community with a shared future. Both sides are important forces in boosting free trade and supporting multilateralism. Booming cooperation in the digital economy between China and ASEAN provides new potential for bilateral cooperation.

Since the comprehensive implementation of the China-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement in 2010, trade in goods and services between the two sides has grown rapidly through the integration of industrial and value chains.

The signing of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership - a landmark achievement for regional economic integration, multilateralism and free trade - will inject new and sustained momentum into the bilateral cooperation and the global economy when the world’s largest free-trade deal comes into effect.

China sees ASEAN as a priority in its neighbourhood diplomacy and a key region in the joint high-quality construction of the Belt and Road.

At the 18th China-ASEAN Expo and China-ASEAN Business and Investment Summit held in the southern Chinese city of Nanning, record-high value of contracted investment deals, which stood at 300 billion yuan (around $46.59 billion), also highlighted a new starting point for a better and more prosperous future for bilateral relations.

China-ASEAN bilateral trade hit $685.28 billion last year. SUPPLIED

The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership will further boost bilateral trade.
Hong Kong-based Sunwah Group’s confidence in Cambodia’s growth potential has not wavered since it first set foot in the Kingdom in 1995. Taking advantage of Cambodia’s investment friendly reputation, the highly diversified Sunwah expanded its business footprint—from processing seafood to developing condominiums to serve the ever-growing consumer base.

Cambodia’s stable economy, strategic location, corporate tax holidays and pro-foreign investment policies continue to entice investors—like Sunwah—who for decades have made the Kingdom their preferred business destination.

The company shifted from its early investment in the seafood business in the 1990s to property development after it began finding it hard to obtain marine resources such as fish, shrimp and cuttlefish for supplying its export markets.

Sunwah built a seafood processing plant on a 2.5-hectare site at Sihanoukville Port in 1995, which was then considered one of the largest seafood processing plants in Cambodia. “During the good times we used to export six refrigerated containers of seafood to Hong Kong and China per month, and employed more than 100 local workers in our processing plant in Sihanoukville. The company’s history dates back to 1957 when Sunwah was established in Hong Kong with the launch of a Macau seafood processing company.

The conglomerate currently focuses on the core sectors of seafood and foodstuffs, real estate, financial services, technology, infrastructure, media, education and training, green technology and healthcare.

Despite the turn of events in its seafood business in the Kingdom, Sunwah continued its business commitment, leaping into the tight but flourishing property sector.

“After starting our seafood business in 1995, we saw GDP growing around seven per cent from 1998 to 2019, making Cambodia one of the fastest growing economies. So we believe there’s much potential in Cambodia. In addition, there is political stability, and its strategic location sharing borders with Thailand and Vietnam makes it an ideal location for Sunwah to establish its business and reach out to other Southeast Asian markets,” Choi said.

The 63-floor, three-tower Sunwah Pearl luxury condominium—located adjacent to NagaWorld in the heart of Phnom Penh—occupies a prime location in the capital.

A large-scale shopping centre and “green lungs” are some of the upcoming project’s exciting features, while VIP units benefit from a separate entrance.

“We are not threatened by the competition in Cambodia’s property market. Our project’s location is on prime land next to NagaWorld and there are no high rise buildings surrounding the project, and that gives a nice view of the city. If the demand for Phase 1 is good, we will launch Phase 2,” Choi said.

Cambodia has transitioned from an agriculture-oriented economy to one based on manufacturing and services, while the Kingdom’s entry into the World Trade Organisation in 2004 further strengthened trade integration and created trade benefits for investors such as Sunwah, he said.

And Sunwah has also transcended beyond its conventional business activities to provide skills training for Cambodians, with the Sunwah Foundation involved in charitable activities in the Kingdom.

The foundation in February last year signed a memorandum of understanding with the National University of Management (NUM) to establish the Jonathan KS Choi Culture Centre at NUM. The Sunwah Foundation also donated 50,000 face masks to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, and NUM when the Covid-19 outbreak began in March 2020.

“Every year Sunwah Foundation will sponsor two NUM students to study a two-year masters degree at the University of Macau and two other students to Jinan University in Guangzhou,” Choi explained.

The Hong Konger said the Sunwah voyage has been a fruitful one. “My grandfather sailed from China to Vietnam and Cambodia, and to other Southeast Asian countries. When he landed in Cambodia, he started the seafood business and since then we have continued doing business in Cambodia. It has been a rewarding journey,” Choi said.
HAPPY
National Day
PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA!!

MERIDIAN INTERNATIONAL HOLDING WELCOMES
SHERWISBY SCHOOL FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM,
IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE CELEBRATING OF CHINA NATIONAL DAY.

MERIDIAN INTERNATIONAL HOLDING’S MANAGEMENT & TEAM
WISHING ALL CHINESE CLIENTS & BUSINESS PARTNERS
A SAFE AND ENJOYABLE NATIONAL DAY - 1st OCTOBER 2021.

Let’s Celebrate!

FROM THE MANAGEMENT AND TEAM OF

MERIDIAN INTERNATIONAL HOLDING WELCOMES
SHERWISBY SCHOOL
TO FLATIRON BY MERIDIAN
Flatiron by Meridian: Award-winning landmark the jewel of Phnom Penh

Flatiron by Meridian, an award-winning development located in the heart of Cambodia’s capital Phnom Penh, is expected to receive its Temporary Occupation Permit (TOP) soon. Inspired by the Flatiron in New York, the striking structure has become a distinctive part of Phnom Penh’s skyline and a landmark in the Central Business District. The 41-storey mixed-used development houses office space and Serviced Residence will be operated under Citadines apart’ hotel brand, managed by The Ascott Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of Capitaland Limited, pioneered Asia Pacific’s first international-class serviced residence.

Located in Phnom Penh’s city centre, Flatiron by Meridian is situated next to Russian Boulevard which is one of the prime locations in the Cambodian capital. It not only offers easy access to the airport but to places of interest such as the Central Market and malls such as Aeon. Flatiron by Meridian will also be home to the Flatiron Club which comprises of a skypool, gym and yoga room. This exclusive club open to a limited number of members and priority for the usage of the Club will be given to office users of the development.

Those looking to indulge in a vast array of culinary choices will be spoilt for choice at Flatiron by Meridian, as Thalias Hospitality Group will be the sole provider of a holistic dining experience to all consumers in this development. The food and beverage establishments offered in Flatiron by Meridian by the Group promise to provide consumers with a plethora of dining options and excellent service. Several celebrated brands under the Group will be housed in Flatiron by Meridian such as the all-time favourite Khêma, famous for its free flow offerings, as well as Khêma Go which will offer a range of bakery, viennoiseries, savouries and beverages. The Group has also created a new restaurant concept – Siena Restaurant Wine & Bar – that is set to debut in this landmark development in Phnom Penh City Centre. This new upmarket food collective, will surely be the top choice for diners looking for quality cuisine in a social and relaxed atmosphere. Thalias Hospitality Group’s delectable offerings are not limited to just consumers at its establishments in Flatiron by Meridian. Guests staying at the Serviced Residence operated under Citadines Apart’ hotel will also enjoy the scrumptious fare provided by the Group in the form of breakfast and room service dining options.

The prestigious development will house Shrewsbury School as one of its anchor tenants. This marks the School’s first foray into the Cambodian capital, Phnom Penh, will comprise of a nursery and kindergarten. Founded in 1552 by King Edward VI, Shrewsbury School is one of the great nine prestigious schools in England and noted for nurturing numerous many distinguished alumni, including the famous naturalist, Charles Darwin, in its history which has spanned five centuries. Shrewsbury School’s first outpost in the Cambodian capital, Phnom Penh, will comprise of a nursery and kindergarten. The School aims to offer an inspirational English language education for students, caring for them in an organisation committed to continuous improvement, and providing outstanding opportunities both in and out of the classroom.

In order to implement the overall ethos and core values of the school, a full development master plan for whole person education will be developed. This 15-year British curriculum will strategically blend the ethos and core values of Shrewsbury School Cambodia in with proven pedagogical techniques, so that effective education can be provided at different phases of a child’s development.
Ming Fai in Cambodia ‘for long haul’

Ming Fai Group, the Hong Kong-listed leaders in world-class hotel and airline products, is expanding its Cambodian operations, including bringing its high-quality products into the retail market.

Praising Cambodia for its human resources and stable business environment, the ‘total solutions provider for hotels’ is planning to expand its local workforce to some 5,000 from the current 2,000 at its 17-block factory in the Kingdom.

Founded in 1980, the Shenzhen, China-based manufacturer was incorporated in the Kingdom as Ming Fai Enterprise (Cambodia) Co Ltd in January 2018 after carefully exploring the business climates of countries in the region.

“Having carried out extensive research into ASEAN nations, we decided to invest in Cambodia because it is a stable country, while the foreign exchange controls makes it easy for us to do business here from Hong Kong and China,” Ching says.

Cambodia’s economy and development have great potential and will only continue to go up. Cambodia has a young workforce, and we want more Cambodians to join us as we are here for the long haul, investing in the country and its people as the nation grows.

“By expanding our Cambodian production from the manufacture of our airline pouches, retail bags and slippers into the next phase of the filling production line for liquids and bottling,” said Ching Tsun-wah, vice-president and executive director of Ming Fai.

“While hotel and airline amenities are available in a large range of traditional bottles. For example.

We are expanding our Cambodia strategy to include B2C channels and promoting our own brands in Cambodia – such as the Bath and Body range of shampoo, conditioner, lotions and face products – in the retail market as well as the online shop,” he said.

Ching says Ming Fai is also aiming to soon have its Cambodian-made cosmetic products readily available to Cambodians in the Kingdom’s stores.

“We started our own innovations a few years back. With the whole world talking about the importance of being eco-friendly, we developed a product called the ‘Shampoo Bar’, which is a plastic-free product replacing traditional bottles.

“Cambodia is where we want to further expand the retail business, and the whole idea is to bring 5-star quality into retail with affordable prices. The new ‘Shampoo Bar’ will be available in Cambodia to take away what they want, and if for some reason they cannot find what they need, we can then assist with customisation.”

“With a mammoth 10,000 square metre showroom – the ‘Total Solution Service Center’ – in the Chinese southern coastal city of Shenzhen, Ming Fai plans to expand the workforce at its 17-block factory in Kampong Speu.

Ming Fai plans to expand the workforce at its 17-block factory in Kampong Speu.

Providing a bespoke and comprehensive product offering across the full range of PP&E – operating supplies and equipment – and FF&E – furniture, fixtures, and equipment – for the hotel industry, Ching said there are plans under way to open a smaller version in Phnom Penh.

“Hotels can come in to the store and take away what they want, and if for some reason they cannot find what they need, we can then assist with customisation.”

“We have very strong connections with the hotels, and we take care of the consolidation for our customers so they don’t have to go to supplier A, B, C and D.”

“This is what we mean when we say Ming Fai is the ‘total solutions provider for hotels,’” he said.

Having become a leader in supplying the international hotel and airline sectors, Ching said Ming Fai is continuing to expand into the body care and cosmetics retail segment.

“When Ming Fai was founded back in 1980, we started with hotel amenities and accessories like toiletries such as shampoo, conditioner and bath gel. We then expanded from liquid products to everything you find in a hotel.

“We over 50 thousand products in our range, and we are diversifying further, for example into retail personal care products and cosmetics,” he said.

Ching says Ming Fai is also aiming to soon have its Cambodian-made cosmetic products readily available to Cambodians in the Kingdom’s stores.

“While hotel and airline amenities remain our core business, we also want to expand further into other sectors like retail. In Cambodia, we are looking in the very near future to develop into retail products in the mass market, such as supermarkets and department stores.”

“Cambodia is where we want to further expand the retail business, and the whole idea is to bring 5-star quality into retail with affordable prices. In the long run, we will put more resources into innovation and technologies in the Kingdom, to further develop the retail segment, branding and promote the Cambodian-made iconic brand.”

“We have already registered brand trademarks and submitted products for registration, and we are confident that with strong marketing promotions – with our company and the quality of our products having been introduced to the market – the consumer will choose our products,” Ching said.

Happy 72nd National Day
FROM THE MANAGEMENT AND TEAM

The ‘total solutions provider for hotels’ has a 10,000 square metre showroom in Shenzhen.
Secondary and high schools in Cambodia reopened gradually on Wednesday after the majority of the population in the Southeast Asian nation have been vaccinated against Covid-19.

At the Preah Sisowath High School in Phnom Penh, students properly wore face masks while entering and had their temperatures checked and hands sanitised at the entrance.

“We have strictly abided by the standard operating procedures and the number of students in a classroom is limited to a maximum of 15,” Preah Sisowath High School vice principal Sam Kamsann told Xinhua.

“Students who are not vaccinated are not allowed to enter the school campuses, but they can continue teaching and learning online,” he added.

With a total population of 16 million, Cambodia launched a Covid-19 vaccination drive for 10 million adults in February, and for nearly two million adolescents aged from 12 to under 18 in August.

Around 9.77 million adults and 1.71 million adolescents had received their first vaccine dose to date, accounting for 71.8 per cent of the Kingdom’s population, according to the Ministry of Health.

Almost all of the Covid-19 vaccines used in the country’s immunisation campaigns are China’s Sinovac and Sinopharm.

“Without support from China, we would definitely not have had enough vaccines for our people,” Prime Minister Hun Sen said, adding that Cambodia appreciates China’s assistance in helping combat the Covid-19 outbreak.

Education Minister Hang Chuon Naron said in a statement on Monday that teachers and students must be vaccinated and must show their vaccination cards before entering schools.

“The biggest risk of all would be children not returning to school soon,” she said. "While children can get infected from the virus, they are less likely to develop severe disease or die compared with adults, especially compared with the elderly,” she added.

Li said the negative impacts of prolonged school closures would be huge, including losses in physical activity, mental health and learning, as well as an additional burden to working parents.

“While the risk of outbreaks in schools is not zero, it can be managed. Having a Covid-19 response in place for schools is essential so that any cases are detected and responded to quickly to prevent further spread,” she said.

Students have returned to schools after a long pause due to the pandemic. SUPPLIED
Lower Sesan II hydropower station providing bright future for relocated Stung Treng villagers

“THERE has not been this project, we would have still been living in hardship, using kerosene-burning lamps or batteries,” Souy For, a 51-year-old father-of-two, said of a new power station in Cambodia.

He noted that the key project – the Lower Sesan II hydropower station – is bringing unprecedented development to his village.

“At the new village, because of low-priced and stable electricity, we have experienced something new such as air-conditioning, fans, refrigerators and televisions, which we had never had at the old village due to the lack of electricity,” he said, adding that the future is very promising for them in the new Srekor Thmey village.

For was among hundreds of families who voluntarily agreed to leave their old villages for relocation to new places to pave the way for the development of a 400 megawatt Lower Sesan II hydropower station in the Sesan district in Cambodia’s northern Stung Treng province.

Completed in 2018, the Lower Sesan II hydropower station is a joint venture between China’s Huaneng Hydro-energy Security Co. Ltd. and Cambodia’s Royal Group with 51 per cent and 39 per cent of shares, respectively.

Cambodian Environment Ministry secretary of state and spokesman Neth Pheaktra said the project is empowering the Southeast Asian nation’s socio-economic development with the capacity of 400 megawatts of clean renewable energy.

“The project is essential to ensure Cambodia’s energy security and it has been providing tremendous benefit to the whole Cambodia and its people,” he said.

New life
Sixty-three-year-old farmer Forouen Heng was relocated to the village in 2016, beginning a new life with an 80-square-metre wooden house and five hectares of farmland provided by the local government and the project company.

He planted cashew trees on his five hectares of land, which earned him nearly $3,000 a year from harvesting cashew nuts.

“Now my family has a steady income and our living conditions are much better,” Forouen said.

Chief of Srekor Thmey commune Forouen Choeun said the community currently has 996 families with nearly 3,000 people.

“Their living conditions have positively changed after they moved to this new place,” he said. “Some families had only bikes or old motorcycles at the old village, but now they own two or three motorcycles or a car.”

He added that currently, each relocated family has a few smartphones and it is quite different from the past when few families could even afford a cellphone.

New award
Electricite du Cambodge (EDC) has given the “Excellent Power Generation Enterprise Award” to the Lower Sesan II hydropower project in recognition of the company’s achievements.

The Fisheries Administration of Cambodia in July issued a certificate to the project in recognition of the company’s achievements in fish protection.

Pheaktra said the plant has paid particular attention to not only the affected people, but also environmental protection by complying with all requirements in the Environmental Impact Assessment paper.

Xinhua
BRI projects help the Kingdom to cushion economic fallout during Covid-19 pandemic

Max Pengfei and Nguon Sovan

Projects under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) have been helping buffer Cambodia’s economic development against the fallout of Covid-19, officials and academics said in recent interviews.

Cambodian government chief spokesman Phay Siphan said BRI projects like the construction of the Phnom Penh-Sihanoukville expressway, the new Siem Reap international airport, the national stadium, and the Sihanoukville Special Economic Zone (SSeZ), among others, have provided tremendous benefits to Cambodia’s economic development during the pandemic.

Despite the impacts of Covid-19, construction of mega projects like the Phnom Penh-Sihanoukville expressway and the 700-megawatt power plant in Sihanoukville has made headway steadily, promoting Cambodia’s economic development, he said, adding that when completed those projects will play a very important role in helping boost Cambodia’s economy in the post-pandemic era.

“The SSeZ has importantly contributed to supporting the country’s exports, and all hydropower plants have supplied stable electricity, which is crucial to ensure the normality of people’s daily lives and businesses,” he told Xinhua.

Since its inception in 2013, the BRI is becoming the new engine of global economic growth, Siphan said, adding that it has importantly contributed to boosting regional and global cooperation in terms of hard and soft infrastructures, economy, trades, investment opportunities, cultural exchange, and people-to-people connectivity.

Cambodia’s economic growth is expected to rebound by 2.5 per cent this year after experiencing a contraction of minus 1.9 per cent last year, according to the government’s latest forecast.

Neak Chandarith, director of the Cambodia 21st Century Maritime Silk Road Research Center, said the BRI projects have played a stabilising role in anchoring economic development in Cambodia during the pandemic, while there are disruptions elsewhere.

He said, according to an operator’s report, the SSeZ saw a rise of 44.51 per cent year-on-year in the value of imports and exports reaching $1.185 billion in the first seven months of this year.

Meanwhile, the construction of the Phnom Penh-Sihanoukville expressway, which is expected to be completed on schedule despite the pandemic, has created thousands of jobs for Cambodians.

“The expressway will reduce travel time and costs, and improve the logistics connectivity between Phnom Penh and Sihanoukville to the world, thus fuelling faster economic growth and alleviation of poverty in the country,” Chandarith told Xinhua.

Kim Phea, director-general of the International Relations Institute at the Royal Academy of Cambodia, said the BRI projects are excellent opportunities for Cambodia and it is a right development train for Cambodia to board.

He said the development of infrastructure such as roads, rails, airports, seaports, hydropower plants, and special economic or industrial zones under BRI are key in reducing logistics costs in the Kingdom, enhancing economic competitiveness, and diversifying sources of growth.

“BRI also strengthens the economic performance of Cambodia. During and post-Covid-19, BRI projects will play more important role in Cambodia’s economic development,” Phea said.

He suggested that China continue to help infrastructure development in Cambodia so as to improve its logistics and cost competitiveness for the next stage of development.

He added that human capital development and technology transfers are equally important areas of cooperation for Cambodia to realise its inclusive development goals.

Proposed in 2013, the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road (BRI) aims to build trade and infrastructure networks connecting Asia with Europe and Africa on and beyond the ancient Silk Road routes.
China and Cambodia continue to energise their economic engagements by enhancing dialogue, both at the government level and with two-track diplomacy.

China’s Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Cambodia HE Wang Wentian said that China and Cambodia are currently at important stages of development.

“We are willing to work with all peace-loving countries and people, including Cambodia, to pursue peace and harmony, hold high the banner of development and cooperation, and build a community with a shared future for mankind,” Wang said.

China experts, trade analysts and media from both sides have been debating ways to enhance cooperation between both the economies and the directions trade ties are heading.

The China-Cambodia Economic and Trade Cooperation Forum on July 23 was hosted by Economic Daily and co-organised by the Chinese Institute of Economic Trends and Cambodia’s Asian Vision Institute.

Chinese and Cambodian experts held talks at the forum on topics such as “China-Cambodia development strategy alignment”; “Opportunities for China-Cambodia economic and trade cooperation”; and “Prospects for China-Cambodia digital economic cooperation” to discuss new opportunities and developments in China-Cambodia economic and trade cooperation.

Economic Daily president and editor-in-chief Zheng Qingdong said that as an important public opinion platform for the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese government to guide national economic work, Economic Daily has more than 10 directly affiliated newspapers and magazines with a daily reading volume of over 100 million through various information dissemination channels.

“Economic Daily is an important window for understanding Chinese economic trends. We are willing to serve as a bridge for China and Cambodia to exchange ideas, gather wisdom and seek common ground to contribute to the economic and trade cooperation and development between China and Cambodia,” Zheng said.

Chairman of the board of directors of the Asian Vision Institute Dr Sok Siphana said the Chinese government donating Covid-19 vaccines for the smooth implementation of the vaccination programme in Cambodia highlighted the strong ties between the two nations.

“This demonstrated the deep friendship between Cambodia and China at such a critical moment. In the future, we must strengthen the economic cooperation between the two countries, and work together to get out of the impact of the epidemic as soon as possible,” Siphana said.

President of the Asian Vision Institute Dr Chheang Vannarith said investment and trade cooperation between Cambodia and China had developed vigorously over the past two decades. China has been Cambodia’s largest trading partner, the largest source of foreign direct investment and foreign aid for many years.

Enhanced dialogue helps chart route to even brighter China-Cambodia future
China-aided 2023 SEA Games stadium symbolises close Sino-Cambodian ties

Mao Pengfei and Nguon Sovan

TRAVELLING along National Road 5 in the north of Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia, tourists can easily spot a mammoth sailing ship-shaped structure – the China-funded Morodok Techo National Stadium. The 60,000-seat stadium will be the centrepiece venue for tournaments when Cambodia hosts the Southeast Asian (SEA) Games for the first time in May 2022.

Developed by the China State Construction Engineering Corporation (CSCEC) under China grant aid, the project started in August 2017 and was fully completed last month. A ceremony marking the handing over of the stadium to Cambodia was held on September 12 in the presence of Prime Minister Samdech Techo Hun Sen and visiting Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

Modern, innovative design

Cambodian Tourism Minister Thong Khon, who is also the president of the National Olympic Committee of Cambodia, said the stadium is a great achievement in the Kingdom’s sports sector and a new symbol of the unbreakable friendship between both nations.

The 39.9-metre structure is built in the shape of a sailing ship – with both of its prows 99 metres tall – and is encircled by an moat. The 60,000-seat stadium in full capacity of 60,000, with a design that will allow a full evacuation in seven minutes in case of emergency,” he said.

He added that QR codes have also been installed on each seat. Located some 10km from the centre of Phnom Penh in the northern part of the capital, the stadium houses a hotel, food courts, sportswear and equipment shops, and other facilities.

"It will not only support the development of sport, but also serve as a magnet to attract tourists, especially Chinese guests, to Cambodia in the post-Covid-19 pandemic era," Khon said.

Ironclad friendship

The stadium is a significant project between Cambodia and China under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), aiming at promoting sport, cultural exchanges and people-to-people contact.

Speaking at the event, Hun Sen said the stadium was “the fruit” of close cooperation between Cambodia and China. “It’s a new record of our ironclad friendship between Cambodia and China. Without China’s support, our dream would definitely not have come true. It will promote Cambodia’s image internationally.

"I hope that Chinese people and athletes will enjoy their sports events at this stadium, and I hope that Cambodian athletes will make more achievements in the 2023 SEA Games,” he said.

Cambodian government chief spokesman Phay Siphan said the stadium clearly demonstrated China’s particular attention to supporting Cambodia’s sports development.

"The stadium will serve as another bridge to connect the hearts of the peoples of our two countries. It will also promote people-to-people bonding between Cambodia and the rest of the world because it will bring together athletes and visitors from around the globe when there are major tournaments," Siphan said.

Raising Cambodia’s profile

Cambodia Football Federation secretary-general Keo Sareth said the stadium has not only injected fresh impetus into the Sino-Cambodian ties but also improved Cambodia’s image internationally.

"We had wished to build a modern and large stadium like this for a long time. Now, with China’s support, our dream comes true. It will promote Cambodia’s honour and prestige in the international arena," Sareth said.

National sprinter Pen Sokong, 28, said he admired the stadium. "It’s a pride for Cambodia because in our history, we have never had such a great stadium," he said.
Chinese brands occupy a sizable market share of mobile phones in Cambodia. MEAN RANGSEY

China mobile phones ring in greater digital connectivity in the Kingdom

The proliferation of Chinese-made mobile phones in Cambodia has increased in recent years with the arrival of more Chinese nationals and investments.

The official launch of the Transsion brand in the Kingdom is a recent example of popular Chinese brands that are now competing with others like Oppo and Vivo in the Cambodian market.

Chinese brands are now occupying a sizeable market share of mobile phones in Cambodia, exceeding 80 per cent as of August.

Their fashionable, user-friendly, reliable and affordable units are considered among the main reasons why Chinese brands occupy a strong position in the market.

The rapid economic growth of the Kingdom for more than two decades prior to the Covid-19 outbreak in early 2020 helped to raise disposable incomes among Cambodians, which also contributed to the growth of the mobile phone market as demand rose.

According to the World Bank, due to fierce competition among telco operators, Cambodia’s data tariff level is very low compared to other countries, which has greatly increased the use of data.

The average data traffic per person per month is 6.9G – the highest among low- and low-middle-income countries.

The increasing number of mobile phones and demand for data put forward higher requirements on the data network operators. Huawei, which has been working in Cambodia for 23 years, has played an important role in this process.

Huawei Cambodia said that helping more than 80 per cent of Cambodia’s population use fast and affordable digital networks is one of the most significant impacts Huawei has brought to Cambodian society.

In addition to the mobile phone market, online shopping, electronic payment and express delivery platforms, among others, have bolstered Cambodia’s digital life.

According to data analysis company Similarweb, four of the top five shopping apps in Cambodia are linked to Chinese companies – namely Alibaba, Weisnow, Taobao and Leda.

The Kingdom’s manufacturing capacity is not presently strong, with a large number of goods needing to be imported, and platforms such as Alibaba have opened channels for Cambodian consumers to obtain high-quality and affordable Chinese products.